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ABSTRACT

This examination addresses sociocultural, educational, and psychological implications for the planning and implementation of large-scale educational interventions such as Project Follow Through. The first part of the paper provides an overview of issues related to the educational plight of economically disadvantaged children. Particular attention is given to the notion of cultural diversity and its educational implications. The latter portion of the paper consists of a critical analysis of the theoretical assumptions of Follow Through programs implemented during the past decade. These programs are classified according to four approaches: behavior modification, cognitive growth, personal growth, and sociocultural and bilingual/bicultural. Specific recommendations for overcoming the theoretical limitations of these previous programs are presented. Emphasis is placed on acknowledging racial and ethnic differences rather than stressing conformity. (RH)

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Sociocultural and Educational Assumptions in Follow Through Programs: A Need for Pragmatic Integration

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The Follow Through initiative is destined to go on record as one of the most ambitious large-scale educational intervention programs implemented in the history of American education. It is one of the most comprehensive and costly attempts to determine effective strategies to meet the educational needs of economically disadvantaged children. Much has been said and written about the efficacy of the various Follow Through models and of the factors which impeded their complete success. However, most of these assessments have tended to focus on specific methodological, implementation, and/or evaluation problems (e.g., House, Gloss, McLean, & Walker, 1978; Anderson, St. Pierre, Proper, & Steffins, 1978; Wisler, Burns, & Iwamoto, 1978; Hodges, et al., 1980). Critical analyses of the underlying theoretical assumptions of the different Follow Through programs are few and far between (Maccoby & Zellner, 1970; Kennedy, 1977).

The present paper addresses crucial sociocultural, educational and psychological considerations which have significant implications for the planning and implementation of large-scale educational intervention programs. The first part of the paper provides an overview of critical issues related to the educational plight of economically

disadvantaged children. Particular attention is given to the notion of cultural diversity and its educational implications. The latter portion of the paper consists of a critical analysis of the theoretical assumptions of the Follow Through programs implemented during the past decade. Specific recommendations for overcoming the theoretical limitations of previous Follow Through programs are also presented.

Economic Disadvantage and Education

Economic disadvantage is the single most crippling factor effecting educational attainment. It is a well known fact that a child's ultimate educational attainment is highly correlated with the socio-economic status of his or her family (Jencks, 1972). About half of the children born into middle-class families can be expected to earn upper middle-class educational credentials defined as more schooling than 80% of their peers. On the average, middle-class children receive four more years of schooling than lower-class children (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1978).

This great discrepancy in educational attainment between poor and rich children has been attributed to several factors ranging from genetic inferiority to social pathology. Though the data is far from consistent, the evidence seems to show that basic aptitude and amount of effort only account for a relatively small portion of the educational gap. Indeed, cultural orientation, values, and attitudes toward school play a much larger role then either aptitude or economics. The middle-class home environment reinforces the values and attitudes inherent in the educational system. Hence, while the middle-class

child may not enjoy school, he assumes very early in life that he will stay in school to obtain necessary educational credentials he or she needs to achieve their life goals. Conversely, working-class or lower-class children quickly learn that they need not stay in school if they dislike it. The inescapable conclusion is that if we wish to equalize the educational attainment of children from different educational backgrounds, we must focus on cultural attitudes and values as well as financial resources.

Minority Versus Majority Groups

The discrepancy between the educational attainmant of the economically advantaged and disadvantaged is further mediated by racial and ethnic background. Economically disadvantaged racial and ethnic minority children enter school at a much greater disadvantage than economically deprived mainstream children who solely have to contend with "class" differences. The culture, language and heritage, not to mention skin color and other physical characteristics of economically deprived children are compatible with that of other mainstream children. Minority group children, on the other hand, are forced to cope with the added burden of cultural, historical and linguistic incompatibilities. These incompatibilities in the sociocultural background of the children and the educational system have taken their toll in the educational attainment of economically disadvantaged minority group children (Cardenas & Cardenas, 1977).

The Burden of Responsibility-Individual or Society?

In the "land of the free" it is indeed difficult to argue against the notion that the individual has the right to choose the kind and extent of formal education which he or she wishes to attain. Following this rather simplistic line of thinking, it could be argued that every individual regardless of background characteristics is ultimately responsible for his or her success and failures in and out of the educational system. Indeed, it is precisely this type of reasoning that led to wide acceptance of "victim-fault" explanations for the lack of educational attainment among members of disadvantaged groups in general and ethnic and racial minority groups in particular. In the case of racial and ethnic minorities, placing the blame on the individual serves to maintain the status quo by legitimizing existing inequalities. From a social psychological perspective, victim-fault explanations are cognitive distortions serving the dual function of preserving ingroup solidarity while justifying the derogation and exploitation of the outgroup.

The burden of responsibility for the education of the members of a prosperous society such as ours cannot be placed on the individual alone. The formal education system as a social institution has an enormous impact on the future of children in this country. Educational successes and failures can determine directly or indirectly the economic alternatives available to an individual at the conclusion of formal schooling. Indeed, the range of occupational options is largely based on a student's performance and experiences in the educational system. Educators and policy makers must work

together to develop and implement educational programs to provide a socially responsive quality education for every child in this country. The United States as the leading prosperous democratic society must strive to eliminate educational inequality.

Cultural Diversity and the American Educational Institution

Despite ideological and philosophical differences among social scientists regarding the potent issues of culture and ethnicity in American society, the basic fact remains that cultural diversity is the rule rather than the exception in this country. Based on a multiplicity of factors, the educational institutions of this nation have been forced to address "clinetele" representing vastly different cultures, value orientations and ethnic heritages. Social scientists and theoreticians have sometimes attempted to minimize the influence of these differences in an effort to add uniformity and confluence to the educational curricula (Heller, 1971; Kluckhohn & Strodtback, 1961).

The reality of cultural diversity can no longer be ignored or denied as the 1980's confront society with the ineffectiveness of current approaches to its minority populations and the dramatic need to realign priorities, strategies and philosophies. The "pathological" perspective of social scientists which faults minority groups for perpetuating and maintaining dysfunctional characteristics has gained ascendancy over other explanations (Ramirez, 1970). This rationale has imposed upon minority group members the belief that the American school is the principal agent of acculturation into mainstream society.

This idea has been derailed as it becomes increasingly obvious that minority students are not benefiting adequately nor equitably from educational institutions. The minority community is no longer willing to accept these discrepancies in educational attainment and is beginning to insist that society assume some responsibility for the quality of learning of all of its members regardless of cultural diversity (Lopez, 1964).

The Melting Pot and the American Yardstick: The Case of Ethnic Minorities

Culturally different citizens are unwilling to accept the "melting pot" theory as a feasible one and are instead insisting that the educational system teach their children bilingually and biculturally. Emphasis is now being placed on recognizing differences and working within those differences rather than forcing minorities to suppress their ideals and accept "Americanization" as a way of life.

The unfortunate effect of the melting pot philosophy has been to encourage a one-sided identity among culturally diverse populations. Students are forced to choose between the culture of their home and that of the school. No other alternatives are provided under a system based on the melting pot ideology. The reality that this ideology has not worked to the benefit of students or the society in general leads to the need for a third option which permits the child to enjoy satisfying relations in more than one cultural world and to identify with aspects of both of those cultures.

The conformist view of the melting pot considers acculturation desirable only if the majority, middle-class cultural pattern is

taken as ideal. All other cultural forms are considered inferior, of less value, status and importance. How "Americanized" the individualindividual can become is the yearstick by which his/her success or failure is determined.

The "Americanization movement" of the 1920's and 1930's is a prime example of this orientation. The attempt was made to strip immigrants of their native cultures and make him/her over into the Anglo-Saxon image of society (Gordon, 1964). This approach vividly displays the distorted perception that the socialization practices within the minority home and community are responsible for the child's inability to profit from his/her educational experience. The persistent conformity view of the melting pot theory has often been ignored in determining the causality of this phenomena.

It becomes increasingly clear that educational planners as well as social scientists must recognize the reality of cultural differences and must incorporate this awareness into program development and implementation. The melting pot has not worked. Minority groups have not "en toto" become Americanized and the ensuing "problems" remain to be dealt with.

Cultural Democracy and Educational Programs

The concept of cultural democracy as defined by Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) maintains that the individual can be bicultural and still be loyal to American ideals. This philosophical precept recognizes the right of each individual to remain identified with the culture and language of his/her cultural group if they so choose.

How the person relates to others, communicates, interacts with his/her environment, develops cognitively and the individual's style of learning are integrally related to and produced by his/her home and community. To ignore these considerations is to deny the individual his/her constitutional rights as guaranteed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

Inherent in the principle of democracy is the emphasis on conscious choice by the individual. Herein lies one of the main pitfalls of the conformity view of acculturation and its tragic ramifications. The primary school-age child has not developed the cognitive skills to enable him/her to discriminate between the culturally dualistic environment he/she encounters. Absent these skills, the child can easily fall prey to allowing the school to make choices for him/her regardless of relevant cultural considerations. Educational policies which choose to ignore the child's differences, in effect, exert great pressure on the individual at a time in his/her life when the values acquired at home are not yet consciously articulable. The choice then is made by the school in a setting which denies the importance of the child's unique sociocultural heritage and forces upon him/her values which may be inconsistent or directly conflict with his/her home and community environment.

Cultural democracy requires that the school allow the child to learn in an environment which acknowledges and respects who the child is and what sociocultural baggage he/she brings with him/her into the educational setting. A culturally democratic learning environment allows the child to acquire knowledge about both of the cultures

he/she must relate to. This learning is also based on patterns of communication, motivation and interpersonal relations which are culturally significant and appropriate. The overall educational goal of such an environment is to assist children in learning to function as competent and effective members of both cultural worlds. Such a culturally democratic goal orientation in schools could vastly effect and counteract the conformity view of acculturation, allowing the child to grow and learn in accordance to his/her own values and ideals. Ignorance of these values may permanently cripple the child and contaminate his/her learning experience.

In assessing the efficacy of educational programs as they relate to minority populations, sociocultural and educational considerations must be reviewed. The presence or absence of culturally democratic ideals significantly effects how a particular program is implemented and developed. The following overview of these considerations will serve as a prelude to a discussion of specific theoretical perspectives and how these have been implemented in Follow Through and other large scale intervention programs.

Sociocultural Considerations

Cultural Assimilation. As previously noted, the assimilationistic melting pot theory represents a prominent orientation in the educational arena. This perspective reflects the notion that the American cultural amalgamation is somehow superior to the "unmelted" ethnic ingredients in their unassimilated state. This view is manifested by the fact that despite the presence of great cultural diversity in American

society, the Anglo-Saxon Protestant group has maintained dominance in major institutions especially in the field of education. Through their control of the nation's resources and the destiny of the individual, the majority group has directed the acculturation and assimilation of other ethnic groups. As a result, some groups have been more "successfully" assimilated into mainstream society than others.

Anglo ethnocentric ideation basically rests on the assumption that maintaining English institutions, language and cutlural patterns is preferable to diversification within the society. Minority group members are attributed negative characteristics such as dependency, lack of initiative and inadequate interactional skills. The often quoted Heller (1971) gave voice to this perspective when she referred to Mexican Americans as products of a culture dominated by values that made it difficult for them to learn in the American public schools.

Many causes have been cited for low educational achievement by minority group members. Language deficiency, socialization practices and religion are among the sociocultural factors used to place the blame on the individual and his culture rather than consider the influence of American policies of educational exclusion. Segregated educational facilities, low teacher expectations, inappropriate materials, techniques and strategies for teaching non-mainstream students were seldom considered in surveying the educational environment in the nation's schools.

Assimilation involves a dynamic process requiring a unidirectional change in values, reference group, internal values and out-group

acceptance. According to Castaneda (1971) the assimilationist view in education can be subdivided into two types, exclusive and permissive. The exclusive assimilationist basic hypothesis emanates from the ideal of perpetuating English language and cultural patterns. The ideal pattern is considered to be that of the Anglo-Saxon. Within this framework, immigrants were encouraged to discard ethnic and cultural attachments and become "Americanized."

The permissive idea of assimilation represents a somewhat more idealistic outlook than the more prevalent exclusivist version. Within this view, American society is seen as permissively mixing all nationalities into a "new race of man" (Crevecoeur, 1904). This version of the melting pot theory makes the presumption of indiscriminate biological and cultural amalgamation. It also assumes that the end product is superior to the individual components prior to their integration into the whole. This philosophy, though benevolent in its rhetoric, when applied to the minority group child in an educational setting has strongly negative ramifications. The inferiority of his/her particular ethnic heritage is assumed and the child is once again told that what he/she is does not represent the greatest good (Dewey, 1916).

Cultural Accommodation. Basic to this theory is the idea that certain nurturing cultures do not provide the necessary influence upon its members to assure their successful functioning in an educational setting. The school is seen as the primary and principal link in promoting the "disadvantaged" child's acceptance of middle-

class culture (Carter, 1970). The deprivation considered to be inherent in the minority environment made it necessary for the school to provide stimuli for successful educational attainment. In order for the school to intervene in this environment, it was deemed necessary that "compensatory education" reach the child as early as possible in his/her development. The typical environment for all low-income children was considered to be one of isolation, restriction and sensory deprivation. The educational system, under this theory, perceives its function as one of re-educating the child, thereby mitigating the negative influences of his/her home and community environment (Deutsch, 1964). Once again, the idea of compensatory education is simply another variation of the melting pot routine and reinforces the conception that something is wrong with non-majority cultures since they do not conform to American cultural standards. This perspective differs from cultural assimilation in that it recognizes the need to accommodate the background idiosyncracies of the individual student.

Cultural Pluralism. Cultural pluralism emerged to counteract and moderate the impact of the Anglo conformity views of acculturation, assimilation and accommodation. This perspective maintains that the reality of what is occurring in American society is a multi-faceted, culturally-diversified conglomeration of cultural groups. Due to the democratic nature of this society, individuals and groups are exercising their right to remain different and not buy into American cultural values and norms.

One assumption of cultural pluralism is that diversity within society enhances rather than detracts from its quality. With each cultural group maintaining its distinctiveness, the entire society can benefit from the diversification. The energy being channeled into stifling differentness could then be effectively utilized to build stronger intergroup relations and acceptance of diversity. Individuals would be encouraged to choose freely their cultural values and pursue their own goals without threat of negative repercussions from majority group members.

This atmosphere of acceptance and sharing, when applied to the educational setting, would allow students greater variety of avenues for learning as well as greater opportunities for exposure to other cultures. Creativity would be enhanced and a more effective educational experience for each individual would result.

Educational Considerations

There are two major traditions which have played a significant role in forming the educational atmosphere of the modern day school. The first is the educational philosophy of "Essentialism", deriving from the conservative philosophical tradition. The other educational philosophy relevant to this discussion is "Progressivism" and is associated with the liberal philosophical tradition.

Essentialism applies to the view that education should involve the learning of basic skills, arts and sciences. These content areas are considered to have been useful to man in the past and likely to enhance the optimal functioning of the individual in society in the

future. The major tenets of this philosophy are closely related to the traditional protestant work ethic. Learning is considered to involve hard work and application. The teacher not the student is deemed to have the initiative in the educational experience. Education, as defined by this tradition, revolves around the process of absorption of prescribed subject matter. Mental discipline as a traditional method was given high priority and strongly emphasized (Mason, 1978).

The conservative Essentialist tradition is in direct conflict with the cultural democracy model which is at the other end of the continuum. Personal autonomy has no place in the Essentialist mode although it is a crucial aspect of cultural democracy (Castaneda, 1971). This lack of personal autonomy is detrimental to the minority child's educational experience as it stifles his/her individual development and forces him/her to fit into the appropriate Anglo behavioral mode.

The Progressive Education Movement developed out of a more liberal framework and resulted in the rejection of the traditional school in the early 1900's. Many educators at that time rejected the excessive formalism of traditional education with its emphasis on authoritarianism, strict discipline, classical subject matter, passive learning and dehumanizing drills. They thought this type of schooling no longer fit the interests and needs of modern man. The progressives favored more freedom for both teachers and students. Ordinary human experience was accepted as a source of knowledge and theories were considered valid only as they related to daily human experience.

Reality is viewed by progressives as a process of unending change which involves the individual's constant interaction with his/her environment.

A leading proponent of this mentality was John Dewey (1901) who held that schools were institutions that would break down class barriers and differences. He thought barriers due to tradition and isolation of the workers from the thinkers should be obliterated. Cooperative activity rather than intense competition was viewed as the preferred mode of interaction. It was considered a duty of education to build citizenship by instilling democratic values and behaviors in students. According to Dewey, the classroom must become a living experiment in social democracy if it is to assume its role in contributing to the improvement of society.

Under the progressive model, education involves respect for the human personality including understanding and appreciation of the family and community. The role of teachers is to guide experiences of students in such a manner as to consistently increase their capacity for self-direction. The concepts of cultural democracy and the progressive tradition fit well together in that both are concerned with advocating educational experiences relevant to the needs of the individual and consistent with the child's values and cultural interests.

The Concept of Follow Through

Follow Through was originally conceived in the late 1960's as a follow-up program to Head Start to provide support services to

disadvantaged children in the first few primary grades. Reductions in appropriations during the Nixon administration, however, impaired the implementation of the initial design before the program could get off the ground. In an effort to salvage as much of the program as possible, the United States Office of Education reorganized the program into a planned variation experiment to test different models for educating economically disadvantaged children in a variety of local settings. The anticipated outcome was to identify better ways to educate poor and minority group children.

Follow Through represents one of the most ambitious American educational experiments of history. It can be described as one of the most comprehensive and costly attempts to address the educational needs of disadvantaged children. Incorporating of experimental design and evaluation, it made possible the field testing of a large diversity of innovative educational approaches. There is no doubt that the results of the Follow Through experiment will continue to have a significant impact on federal policy, evaluation research, and educational innovation and practice long after the conclusion of the Follow Through initiative.

Theoretical Perspectives in Follow Through Programs

More than twenty model Follow Through programs have been implemented in the last decade. These programs represent a wide spectrum of theoretical perspectives in the field of education. However, in spite of differences in theoretical orientation, a number of basic assumptions about teaching and learning exist in all programs

(Maccoby & Zellner, 1970). Specifically, most Follow Through programs are in agreement on the following points:

(1) The child's capabilities must be assessed at the time of entry to adapt the program to his or her level.

(2) Instruction should be individualized to accommodate individual differences in experiences and previous learning.

(3) Regardless of background, every child is capable of learning appropriately presented materials. The fault lies in the materials and/or method of presentation, not in the child.

(4) The educational objectives must be clearly specified, including the skills and knowledge the children will acquire at the conclusion of specific teaching procedures.

(5) The learning of certain "school-appropriate" behaviors, such as paying attention and not disrupting classroom activities, is as important as the learning of specific content.

(6) Finally, most Follow Through programs are in agreement that education should be an enjoyable experience; stress-producing school experiences hinder the learning process.

In spite of these and other similarities in educational objectives, the Follow Through programs differ sharply on a number of psychological and sociocultural assumptions about learning and motivation. While each of the Follow Through programs certainly contains certain unique characteristics which distinguish it from the other programs, it is possible to classify most programs into distinct conceptual categories based on commonalities and differences in sociocultural, psychological and educational assumptions. Most Follow Through programs fall into

one of four schools of thought: (a) behavior modification, (b) cognitive growth, (c) personal growth, and (d) sociocultural and bilingual/bicultural. Following is a brief description of the theoretical assumptions underlying each of the four conceptual groupings.

Behavior Modification Approaches. Following the tune composed by B. F. Skinner, Follow Through programs based on behavior modification principles approach education as a means of producing changes in observable behaviors. Ramp's Behavior Analysis Program employed basic systematic reinforcement techniques to teach disadvantaged children the skills they need to be successful in the educational system. These skills include social as well as academic behaviors. According to the Behavior Analysis model, an effective system of reinforcement must make the reward contingent on improved social or academic behavior. Since immediate delivery of reinforcement is not always possible, the sponsor has instituted the use of tokens in some classrooms. Other Follow Through programs generally based on behavioristic principles include Gotkin's Instructional Games Program and Resnick's Primary Education Project.

Cognitive Growth Approaches. Cognitively oriented models maintain that the learning process is as important as the content itself. Hence, education is seen as a process that should facilitate development of mental structures and operations at the appropriate stage. Weikart's program, based on Piaget's work, implemented a curriculum which incorporates basic principles of cognitive develop-

ment. Accordingly, the child is presumed to progress from a sensory-motor level to verbal level and finally to the symbolic level. A relatively unique feature of Weikart's programs concerns parental involvement in the educational process. Though considerably different in structure and organization, the Tucson Early Education Model can also be classified as a cognitive growth program.

Personal Growth Approaches. Follow Through programs in this grouping emphasize the need to stimulate the child's intellectual curiousity. Children are encouraged to initiate activities and to be self-directed. A major goal of education is to provide children with a wide range of experiences and materials to enable them to develop competence in their own physical and social environment. The Lewis Responsive Education Program concentrates on developing individuals' ability and confidence to solve problems on their own. The enhancement of a child's intellect, sense of autonomy, and self-concept plays a major role in Lewis' program. The classroom environment is structured to be responsive to the child. The EDC program, currently under the direction of Hilliard, is another example of a personal growth approach.

Sociocultural and Bilingual/Bicultural Approaches. Unlike the models associated with the other three theoretical perspectives, the Follow Through programs which fall into this grouping cannot be classified in terms of a primary approach to learning and motivation. Some programs incorporate behavioristic concepts, others are based on humanistic ideas and some adhere to a somewhat eclectic orientation.

The major commonality among the Follow Through programs in this category concerns the need to recognize and incorporate the socio-cultural and linguistic idiosyncracies of economically disadvantaged children into the educational program. For example, the Bank Street Program, currently headed by Smithberg, emphasizes the multidimensionality of a child's learning and development. The child must learn to appreciate the continuity between in-school and out-of-school learning. School activities include community themes as well as academic themes. Stark's Cultural Linguistic Approach and the Responsive Environment Program developed by Far West Laboratory are other examples of socioculturally oriented Follow Through programs.

Only two of the Follow Through programs in this grouping employed a bilingual/bicultural approach, Kronkosky's Bilingual/Bicultural Model and Ramirez's Culturally Democratic Learning Environments Model. However, the models are based on different educational philosophies. Although both models certainly meet Escobedo's (1978) criteria for culturally responsive bilingual/bicultural programs, (use of native language, regard for cultural knowledge, etc.), the models are based on totally different sociocultural and educational assumptions. The Kronkosky model constitutes a cultural accommodation approach. Bilingual/bicultural instruction is intended to serve a transitional function, a buffer to help the bilingual child learn to ultimately function in a standard English monolingual classroom. The Ramirez model, on the other hand, is based on the educational philosophy of cultural democracy which recognizes and advocates the right of each individual to maintain an identity with the culture and language of

his or her ethnic group. Furthermore, the Ramirez Culturally Democratic Learning Environments Model incorporates the formidable contention that bicultural experiences lead to a qualitatively different cognitive style with its unique styles of learning, incentive-motivation, human-relations, and communication. Hence, the Ramirez Follow Through model places great emphasis on the development of bilingual/bicultural competence.

Theoretical Limitations of Previous Programs

In considering limitations of previous programs, one of the most blatant shortcomings seems to be the fact that these programs have been devised to motivate and assist the child from a middle-class point of view. The schools can be seen as middle-class enclaves which allow youngsters with the "skill" and desire to assimilate to progress while those unwilling or unable to assimilate have withdrawn from the opportunities offered by the program. The youth who find rejection from full participation in these enclaves have sought support in their ethnic group, language and culture. They have found their own culture more comfortable, accepting and meaningful to themselves. In rejecting the academic world, however, they are forced to do without the skills necessary for the acquisition of the techniques and methods of upward mobility. These students become caught in a trap that restricts their social and psychological development, a trap created and maintained by culturally insensitive program planners who fail to consider sociocultural variables in their program development.

Children who encounter assimilationistic forces in the school

environment are confronted with extreme pressure to become a part of the predominant culture. Confusion, fear and a sense of frustration are often the tragic results (Litsinger, 1973). Dealing with this stress and leaving the familiarity and support of the home environment leaves little energy for academic endeavors.

These considerations lead to the inescapable conclusion that the educational assumptions of any intervention program must be closely linked to its explicit and implicit sociocultural impact on the individual child. The success or failure of any given program, therefore, can only be determined according to how well the program integrates crucial cultural factors. Success of the program should be decided in light of its sociocultural assumptions about the group being served and how well these assumptions are integrated into the total scheme of the program.

Raising the educational attainment level of the individual student, though indispensable as a goal, should not negate the need to consider the overall social and psychological ramifications of any given intervention program. The lives of children involve interaction with their environment in a myriad of ways and to place undue emphasis on any one particular area to the exclusion of other relevant concerns is to diminish the child's overall life chances. The young child needs an environment that does not make inordinate demands upon him/her in order to develop a healthy self-concept and a sense of "being able to do" (Erikson, 1963). The child has little inclination to learn and achieve until a sense of belonging and acceptance has been established (Maslow, 1954).

Rather than striving to reinforce and support the child's self-definition upon entrance into the educational setting, many programs assume an assimilationistic or accommodating stance which serves only to further hamper the child's functioning in the academic setting. For the culturally different child, who in some cases faces a completely alien environment at school, the task of making his/her own way may seem insurmountable.

The specific models represented by the four categories previously delineated approach sociocultural issues from several positions. The spectrum among programs is a broad one and represents varying degrees of emphasis on assimilation, accommodation and acceptance of cultural diversity. An unfortunate result of these wide variations is the fact that some project sponsors used the program as an opportunity to promote their own theoretical biases without consideration for the long or short term effects of their intervention on the groups effected. Program sponsors in some cases saw the Follow Through format as a chance to experiment with human "guinea pigs" and test out their hypotheses with little concern for the well-being of their subjects. As such, some programs represented an inconsiderate utilization of minority group individuals to "try out the latest fad" in educational intervention without adequate knowledge or forethought as to socio-cultural outcomes or consequences.

Another "built in" weakness of the Follow Through effort was the lack of coordination between projects which fostered competition rather than sharing of expertise and feedback. Program sponsors each jumped on their own theoretical bandwagon often to the exclusion of other

perspectives or research findings derived from other projects. In the long run, the lack of coordination between programs served as a detriment rather than an enriching aspect of the overall efficacy of Follow Through.

As previously noted, each of the four general types of programs surveyed throughout this discussion approached the sociocultural dimension from a different perspective with differing outcomes. The overall success of each project can be seen as directly interrelated to how these crucial sociocultural variables were ignored or included in the theoretical assumptions of the project. To specifically delineate these assumptions and their relationship to sociocultural dimensions is the focus of the following discussion.

Behavior Modification. Programs falling under this theoretical classification fail to consider the cultural ramifications of the behavioral changes they seek to implement. The focus on systematic reinforcement of "appropriate" behaviors assumes that the teacher or program developer has made a determination of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behavior for all students in all situations. This allows for little or no flexibility regarding sociocultural factors or issues.

The role of the teacher as reinforcer and behavior modifier allows him/her to exert considerable control over the child's academic development. The teacher may indiscriminantely determine the appropriateness of the child's behavior and induce changes through the use of powerful reinforcers. These changes, though possibly useful in certain, limited settings, may seriously impair the child's

effective interaction with his/her home and community environment.

Considering the behavioristic de-emphasis of causual factors, behavior modification approaches give little or no credence to the sociocultural factors which have strongly impacted the child by the time he enters the school setting. To ignore the realities of the child's external environment as well as his/her internal dynamics is to violate his/her right to maintain cultural autonomy.

Cognitive Growth. Though some of these programs recognize the need to involve parents in the educational process, the major emphasis is on the development of the child's cognitive capabilities. Though a valid consideration, over-emphasis on cognitive development to the exclusion of sociocultural dynamics may hinder not only the level of the child's educational attainment but also his/her overall development in non-cognitive areas. Social and psychological considerations are often ignored in this basically "essentialist" orientation leading to a possible lessening of the quality of that child's particular life chances.

Cognitive Growth programs which strive to involve parents at an early age of the child's growth are limited by the fact that the foundation for the child's cognitive patterns are established prior to the child's entrance in the educational setting. Cooperation by parents and the variables involved with their inclusion further impact the success or failure of the approach.

Personal Growth. A major difficulty with this model is in dealing with the effects of the very real limitations imposed on

economically disadvantaged youth by their environment. The whole idea of personal growth toward "self-actualization" is alien to an individual from a "survival" background which depends upon a day-to-day existence and where hope has been consistently denied. Children who have experienced a history of failure withdraw from risk-taking situations which could reinforce past negative experiences and self-perceptions. Stigmatized with the notion of failure, fear of being exposed, laughed at or rejected, the minority child may be developmentally unable to explore new behaviors oriented toward personal growth.

Another detriment to this model's efficacy is the fact that many non-minority teachers adhere to the notion that minority youngsters have a negative self-concept and an inferiority component in their personalities which tends to keep them from fully participating and/or working at their top capacity. The development of trust and mutual respect between teacher and learner is an essential component of this approach.

The effectiveness of the Personal Growth orientation hinges on incorporating the feeling that the child's cultural heritage is an intrinsic part of his/her self-image which should be fostered and developed rather than denied or denigrated. In addition, the child should be provided with enough esteem-reinforcement to recognize his/her right to draw from their cultural heritage whichever aspects he/she chooses without excessive anxiety or fear of rejection by either of his/her cultural worlds.

Sociocultural and Bilingual/Bicultural. A primary issue in the relatively few programs oriented toward the integration of cultural factors concerns the rationale for their incorporation. The mere use of culturally-related terminology by no means assures that the program represents a culturally democratic perspective. As previously noted, projects in this category vary along a continuum related to accommodation on one extreme to cultural pluralism on the other.

The more conservative approaches utilize bilingual/bicultural methods with the distinct purpose of eventually "Americanizing" the minority child. The child's native language and culture are valued only as useful tools to accelerate the transition of the student into the Anglo-Saxon ideal rather than to support or enhance the differentness of the individual. These approaches can be extremely powerful in intervening in the child's reality and imposing changes in the most subtle of ways. Under the guise of appreciating and acknowledging the child's uniqueness, the teacher can more readily enter the child's perceptual worlds. Once having gained access to the child's internal processes, the assimilationistic intervener can cause the child to divorce him/herself from values he/she has not yet fully learned to conceptualize or defend.

The opposite and more feasible sociocultural mode involves the culturally democratic acceptance of the child's right not only to use his/her culture to his/her advantage in the present but also to make the choice of maintaining his/her culture throughout his/her development with acceptance, pride and dignity. Rather than viewing language and culture as a means to an end, these approaches reinforce

the value of cultural distinctiveness in and of itself. The child is encouraged to accept his or her cultural identity as an intrinsic part of him/herself which need not ever be discarded or denied.

Summary and Recommendations

The principal deficit apparent in most Follow Through programs analyzed in the above section concerns the lack of consideration of the unique sociocultural proclivities of educationally disadvantaged children in general and ethnic minority children in particular. In the planning, implementation and evaluation of these programs, several crucially important considerations were not taken into account. Students representing these populations were often forced to choose between academic achievement and acceptance of their own cultural orientation. Integration of crucial cultural variables in program development and implementation was often not considered in determining a program's efficacy. The overall social and psychological ramifications of any given intervention program were either blatantly ignored or given only cursory treatment in most of the Follow Through efforts. This denial of the child's unique sociocultural assets could only result in further impeding the child's functioning in the academic setting.

The following recommendations should be considered in the planning and implementation of future Follow Through programs.

- Considering the reality of cultural diversity in this nation, intervention programs must acknowledge racial and ethnic differences and abandon the "melting pot" ideal as the preferred mode of adaptation.

- The primary school-age child who is not yet discriminating enough to choose or defend his/her own cultural orientation must be protected from undue pressure by the majority culture to conform and assimilate.
- Educational policies which infringe on the child's right to be different must be uprooted and replaced by culturally democratic policies.
- Inherent in culturally democratic policies must be the recognition and incorporation of culturally significant and appropriate patterns of communication, motivation and interpersonal relations.
- Teachers and administrators must recognize their obligation to incorporate the sociocultural concerns of minority communities in planning and implementing large scale intervention programs.
- Though basic skill attainment must continue to be a primary consideration in curricula planning, a more progressive orientation must be implemented which also recognizes the importance of human experiences and the unending process of change crucial to the individual's overall development and growth.
- The Anglo ethnocentric ideals of acculturation and assimilation must be abandoned as well as the assumptions that maintaining English institutions, language and cultural patterns is preferable to diversification within society.
- Educational institutions must base their programs on the overall goal of assisting all children to function as competent and effective members of both of their cultural worlds.

- The formal education system must recognize and accept its responsibility in providing socially responsive quality education for every child in this country.

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